

ST. PAUL'S EPISTLE

February 2009

Dear Friends,

February is the month of St. Valentine's Day. I have some pretty clear memories of my elementary school celebrations. The teacher would decorate a cardboard box with a slit at the top much like a mail box. And each of us would put in a small valentine addressed to every member of the class. That was the rule. Each of us sent a valentine to everyone else. As we got older, say fourth or fifth grade, a group of us would grumble that there were some people we didn't want to send valentines to. It didn't matter.

As I think back on that exercise that we did every year from Grade 1 to 8, I am realizing something really wonderful about the idea. I'm sure the rule was in place so no one's feelings would be hurt. But, consciously or not, the teachers were giving us a model for relationship that we don't often get as adults: the idea that everyone is deserving of love and attention.

What if we all thought that way all the time? What would the world look like if those rules applied all the time? Of course, Valentine's Day is a commercial celebration that expresses affection in many ways. Valentines still take center stage in most relationships. As we get older and our relationships become more and more intimate, the number of valentines we share are few. Sometimes we only share one with the person with whom we are closest. That valentine surely has special meaning and it should.

I have wondered whether God's loving message to us in the gift of Jesus Christ cannot be understood as the most intimate acknowledgement of how much we are loved. And that gift, that message is given to everyone without exception, just like those early valentines.

Our world is in such turmoil now. Wars, financial challenges, social upheaval, political unrest, and strain on natural resources may contribute to our not noticing God's love in the midst of it all. Until February 25th we continue to celebrate the Epiphany of our Lord. It is during these weeks that we are called to be mindful of the great loving gift God has given us. Epiphany is the manifestation of God in the world through Jesus Christ. Everyday during this time of the church year we are reminded that no matter what befalls us or who we are or how many there are, God is with us. Everyone gets the loving care of God; everyone gets the greatest "I LOVE YOU" message that God has sent and continues to send to us.

I am thinking at this moment that God's message of love to us also contains the hope that we all share when we offer love: "WILL YOU BE MINE?" God asks that of us all the time. Even though God's love is given freely and unconditionally, God hopes that we recognize that God needs us in God's life. God needs us to share that gift of love to the world. God needs us to make sure that everyone gets the message.

This letter is a valentine. Everyone without exception gets the message of love and affection from me to you.

Catechesis Corner



It seems like a long time since we have been together! December was filled with pageant rehearsals culminating in the most wonderful Pageant!

Despite seemingly weekly Sunday snowstorms, we are back on schedule having met again on January 4th and what better follow up to our Pageant than to combine classes and hear the Nativity story. We finished up session 2 with the Presentation in the Temple and the parable of The Leaven. The children worked their small hands through yeast and dough; highlight of the year for many children.

As Lent and Easter approach, our classes will hear an extension of the Good Shepherd introducing the wolf and the hired hand. The children will create colorful and festive Alleluia banners to adorn our church as well as a Lenten garden. As the season changes so do the linens and Frank's chasuble. We will discuss the significance of purple and "waiting". Our session culminates with the Last Supper and a combined class to work hands on with the city of Jerusalem model as it was at the time of Jesus.

NOT TO BE MISSED: Sunday, March 8th Father Frank will conduct an instructed Eucharist in the Parish Hall. A must for young and all! Father Frank guides us step by step through the Eucharist. An amazing learning experience!

We are very pleased to have added two new faces to our Catechesis team. Welcome and **THANK YOU** to Eric Wicks and Sue MacPhee! We can always use more help and schedule flexibly, one session at a time, so if anyone else is interested, please contact Amanda Hubbard.

Reminders:

+No classes on Sunday, February 15th (start of February vacation)

+On regular service Sundays, all children gather in the hall to sing together at 9:45, and then enter the Atrium at 10. On Family Service Sunday, children start in church. Those who wish may come back to the Atrium following the Children's sermon.

+It is *always* our pleasure to see your children's smiling and eager faces every Sunday!

Sincerely,

Ellen Ryan and Amanda Hubbard

High School Youth

We are delighted to announce that three members of the high school youth group will be participating in the rite of confirmation this year. Please keep Tommy Waghorne, Elle Thompson, and Helen Kissel in your prayers as they reflect upon what it means to become an adult in the eyes of the church. Confirmation classes, led by Frank, Emily Mitchell, and Arthur Fergusson, will be held after church on the following Sundays: February 8, March 1, March 15, March 29, April 19, May 3, and May 17. The confirmands are also encouraged to attend a weekend retreat at the Barbara Harris Camp on March 20-21.

The confirmation service will be held on Saturday, May 30, at 10:00am at Church of the Redeemer in Lexington. All members and friends of St. Paul's are encouraged to attend, to celebrate with our confirmands their renewed commitment to the Episcopal Church.

Middle School Youth Group Update

We started off the new year by holding an in-class discussion on truth and lying - thanks to everyone who attended and for their thoughtful contributions! Our next in-class discussion will be held on Sunday, February 1st in the library.

Upcoming events for February:

Our third annual brownie baking extravaganza for the Bedford Community Table will be held on Tuesday, February 10th. Please watch your email for a time!

We will be returning as volunteers for the Special Olympics this year, helping out at one of the basketball tournament sites in Worcester. This is an extremely rewarding service opportunity and we hope lots of you will take part! The date is Sunday, March 1st - please email Suzanne Johnson to express your interest and find out more.

We're looking forward to a great 2009!

Carrie Mathews and Suzanne Johnson

Elementary Sunday School

Alleluia! Jesus is here, and the children are busy saying Alleluia in many ways. Throughout Epiphany we will be creating Alleluias to adorn the parish hall. We joined classes on a snowy Sunday and learned about St. Paul by acting out some of his journeys. Saul galloped along on his stick horse tumbling to the floor on his way to Damascus and the mail carrier worked very hard delivering the many letter scrolls Paul wrote to the early churches. The children heard how Jesus was a boy just like them and how he was baptized by John. Last Sunday the children had a grand time acting out an Epiphany skit written by Louisa Saladino-Kuhl in their new puppet theater built by Ron Presti. Thank you Ron and Louisa for this wonderful gift.

Cathy Presti

Notes from the Nursery School

School opened on January 5 to some very large snow banks in the back parking lot. Children have enjoyed climbing over and sliding down the banks. With buckets and shovels they have been busy building "penguin villages" and "chipmunk houses" in the snow. It has been a very pleasant few weeks. The children seem settled after the excitement of the holidays and happy to be back at school with their friends.

Two new children have started in our two day program. Our enrollment is on-going for the program starting in September 2009. There are openings in both the two day and three day program.

Curriculum for January has included units on penguins, winter and snow, and Chinese New Year. Parent conferences were held at the end of the month. Our bulletin boards and classroom decorations will now start to change from the blue and white of winter to the pink and red of Valentine's Day as we celebrate the holiday.

Lee Frank

Vestry Corner

At the Annual Meeting on January 25, the vestry said goodbye to two members, Carrie Mathews and Peter Ricci, who have completed their three-year terms. We are grateful to Carrie and Peter for their faithful service to the vestry, their willingness to speak their minds, and their dedication to the work of St. Paul's.

We also extend our deepest appreciation to Ron Presti, who concluded his term as senior warden. Ron's love for St. Paul's and his care and concern for its members are evident in everything he does, and we thank him for his leadership over the past three years.

Now we welcome two newcomers to the executive board and two new members to the vestry. Paul Ciaccia and I will be serving the parish as junior and senior warden, respectively, and Dori Pulizzi and Natalie Wicks have begun their terms as vestry members. We look forward to continuing the good work of the church in the year to come. If you have suggestions, questions, or concerns for the vestry, now or at any time throughout the year, please feel free to speak to any vestry member.

The next vestry meeting will be Wednesday, February 11, at 7:30pm in the parish library. All are welcome to attend. The vestry will hold its annual retreat on Saturday, February 14, from 9:00am to 3:00pm at St. Anne's Convent in Arlington. We will meet at the church in the morning to carpool and caravan to the convent.

With best regards,

Emily Mitchell

Long Range Planning Committee

The Vestry recently appointed a Long Range Planning Committee for the parish. The goal of the committee will be to develop a long range strategic plan for St. Paul's covering all aspects of parish life. At the completion of its work, the committee will make recommendations to the Vestry for future action.

As the committee begins its work, it will focus on where we are now, where we would like to be over the next 3 to 5 years, and how we accomplish this in the context of 20 to 40% growth over that five year period. To begin this process, the committee will meet with parish committees and groups to hear their visions for the future and the impediments they see to meeting those goals today. The committee is interested in hearing from all in the parish and will make many opportunities available during the process.

Betsey Anderson
Suzanne Johnson
Ken Larson
Barbara Perry

Paul Ciaccia
Paul Kruger
John MacPhee
Frank Fornaro

OUTREACH NEWS



St. Paul's HS Youth continue to collect used cell phones to be converted into calling cards for our soldiers overseas. Our collection box is in the Narthex. All cell phones and accessories are accepted.

YARN OVERLOAD!!!

Thanks to many contributions we have a great collection of yarn for Linus Blankets. Come pick up a ball or two in the Parish Hall - basket on top of the cabinet. Anyone who would like to learn to knit, please contact Caroline Larson— and bring your knitting to those St. Paul's Tonight rehearsals for the "downtime"!



A Valentine Dinner for Bedford Community Table

Celebrate your love for others by helping provide a Valentine dinner, February 12 for our local food pantry, Bedford Community Table. Adults are needed to help prepare the meal in the afternoon and to help serve in the evening. Middle School Youth will be baking their famous brownies for dessert. For more information, contact Jan Blake.



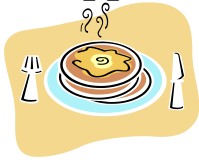
Planning for Girl Scout Sunday



On Sunday, February 8 there will be a meeting in the library after church for all Girl Scouts, past and present who would like to help plan Girl Scout Sunday on March 8. Plans will include assigning roles during the service and choosing a service project. This will be a very QUICK meeting **BEFORE** coffee hour so as not to interfere with St. Paul's Tonight rehearsals. If you cannot attend, but would like to participate in the service, contact Caroline Larson.

Save the Dates!

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper



The Men's Group of St. Paul's will be sponsoring the annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper on Tuesday **February 24th**. Admission is free to all and supper consisting of pancakes, sausages, bacon, juice, coffee, tea and dessert will be served at 6:00 PM.

This year we will have entertainment for everyone provided by Tom and Debbie Foote of Music Together. Tom and Debbie are great musicians and will certainly create an exciting atmosphere for everyone.

Sign up now and feel free to come in costume to celebrate the day.

Don't forget to click through!



Go to www.stpaulsbedford.org and click the Amazon link on the left sidebar. You'll be directed to Amazon's site, where you can shop as usual -- but every purchase you make will earn a little money for St. Paul's. Thanks for your support!



Don't forget to check out goodsearch.com. Our church is registered with this search engine and every time you search, a few pennies will be donated to the church. Just go to goodsearch.com, choose "St. Pauls Episcopal Church (Bedford, MA)" from a scroll down menu and remember to use this search engine when you are looking for a site on the Web.

ST. PAUL'S TONIGHT! 2009

It's time to play the music! It's time to light the lights! It's time to get things started . . . for St. Paul's Tonight! Our biannual musical revue is underway once again. Those of you who participated in its previous incarnations know that St. Paul's Tonight is a wonderful opportunity for the parish to come together in song and dance, sharing fellowship with each other, raising money for the church, and having a grand old time.

Our illustrious director, Chuck Frates, has been working hard on this year's program, which will include music from the world of movies. There will be opportunities for soloists, small groups, chorus members, backstage crew, costume and prop teams, and front-of-house volunteers. Anyone and everyone who would like to participate -- children and adults -- are encouraged to speak to Chuck or Frank as soon as possible.

Rehearsals will be held on Sundays after church and one or two evenings per week. The rehearsals will be staggered to accommodate the busy schedules of the cast members. The show will be performed on Saturday evening, May 9, and Sunday afternoon, May 10, at the John Glenn Middle School auditorium.

Dig out those tap shoes and join the fun!

Community Table

Thursday, February 12th

Keep those tab tops coming!



Tab tops continue to be sent to the Shriner's Burn Hospital, which in turn are combined with other organizations tabs. The tabs contain metal which the Shriner's Hospital extracts and sells. All proceeds are used to help pay bills for the families that incur debts when they stay at various hotels to be near their children, who are in the Shriner's Hospital.

Also, Ed Lawrence is always collecting cans/bottles to retrieve deposits to help support the National Guard Veterans for their every day expenses. Thanks!

**St. Paul's Episcopal Church
100 Pine Hill Road
Bedford, MA 01730**

**Non-profit
Organization
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Bedford MA 01730
Permit No. 11**

Sunday Service of Holy Eucharist: 10:00 a.m.

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Staff:

The Reverend Francis Fornaro, Rector

Tracy Lane, Parish Administrator

Joan Reddy, Music Director

Bob Godoy, Sexton

Officers:

Emily Mitchell, Senior Warden

Paul Ciaccia, Junior Warden

Betsey Anderson, Treasurer

Carol Hokana, Clerk

Vestry:

Andre Barber

Sue Runkle

Sharon Healey

Natalie Wicks

John MacPhee

Heather Marasa

Dori Pulizzi

Prayer attributed to St. Francis

Lord, make us instruments of your peace. Where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

BCP 833

